



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6102.0 - Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2001

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INTRODUCTION

20.2.1 This survey collects information about employees' weekly earnings, employment benefits and trade union membership in August each year. The survey is currently intended to continue on an annual basis.

20.2.2 The collection of a range of socio-demographic and labour force characteristics makes the datasets produced from the survey extremely valuable for comparing and analysing the distribution of both weekly earnings and employment benefits across employees. Data are used in the development and review of wages and labour market policies, and in wage negotiation processes. Data on employment benefits are used to monitor the level of non-wage costs in employment. The survey is the only reliable source of data on the distribution of trade union members by socio-demographic and labour force characteristics.

20.2.3 This section describes only those aspects of the methodology that are unique to this survey, and hence should be used in conjunction with the overview part of this chapter, which outlines the survey methodology used in supplementary surveys.

SURVEY OUTPUT

20.2.4 Data from the survey have been published in **Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0) since 1998. Data from earlier surveys of weekly earnings, trade union members and employment benefits were published in separate publications (see paragraph 20.2.8 for further information). More detailed data are available on request.

20.2.5 The main population of interest is employees. However, employees who are paid solely in kind are excluded. Estimates are produced on an original basis only (i.e. not seasonally adjusted) and include:

Socio-demographic information Sex, age, marital status, relationship in household, family, geographic region, school attendance, birthplace and year of arrival in Australia.

Employee characteristics .
Occupation; industry; hours worked; full-time or part-time status; sector; size of employees workplace; whether have leave entitlements (paid holiday and sick); trade union membership; and employment benefits received (see below).
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Employee earnings	Weekly earnings (in main, second and all jobs); hours paid for; and frequency of pay.
Employment benefits received	Superannuation coverage; provision of paid sick leave; provision of paid long service leave; and provision of paid holiday leave. The following items are collected on an irregular basis: finance benefits; goods and services benefits; housing benefits; telephone benefits; transport benefits; study leave benefits; and holiday benefits.

20.2.6 Data collected in the survey are compiled according to concepts and definitions outlined in Chapter 4 (employment characteristics), Chapter 11 (weekly earnings), Chapter 12 (trade union membership) and Chapter 15 (socio-demographic information, industry and sector).

SCOPE

20.2.7 The scope of this survey is restricted to persons aged 15 years and over. The standard scope restrictions for supplementary surveys outlined in the overview part of Chapter 20 also apply to this survey.

DATA COMPARABILITY OVER TIME

20.2.8 In order to provide a high degree of consistency and comparability over time, changes to survey methods, survey concepts, data item definitions, frequency of collection, and analysis methods are made as infrequently as possible. Over the time the survey has been conducted there have been some changes to the scope and sample size. These changes mean that the standard errors for the survey differ over time. The effect on estimates of the change in scope is considered to have been small. Changes affecting the Labour Force Survey may also affect this survey. Such changes are outlined in Chapter 19 and are not repeated here.

- 1975** Annual survey commenced (August) - preliminary data published in **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Preliminary** (Ref. no. 6.50) and final data in **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution)** (Ref. no. 6.51). Earnings and hours worked data related to 'all jobs'.
- 1976** Survey expanded, additional data collected included 'earnings in main job' and 'hours paid'.
- 1977** Catalogue numbers replaced reference numbers - Cat. no. 6309.0 (preliminary data) and Cat. no. 6310.0 (final data).
- 1983** Survey expanded, additional data on employment benefits collected annually and published separately - preliminary data published in **Employment Benefits, Australia, Preliminary** (Cat. no. 6332.0) and final data in **Employment Benefits, Australia** (Cat. no. 6334.0). Data on employment benefits previously collected in February to May 1979 and published under the same titles. Note: data from the 1979 survey related to employees working 20 or more hours per week; from 1983 data related to all employees, but school students were assumed not to receive benefits other than leave (paid holiday, paid sick and long service), and goods and services benefits.
- 1984** Preliminary publication for weekly earnings discontinued.

- 1985 Employees on workers' compensation excluded from estimates.
- 1986 Survey expanded, additional data on trade union membership in main job collected biennially and published separately - data published in **Trade Union Members, Australia** (Cat. no. 6325.0) (no preliminary publication). Data on trade union membership previously collected in November 1976, and March to May 1982 and published under the same title (with Ref. no. 6.65 in 1976). Note: estimates from the 1976 survey related to trade union membership in main job and also included trade union membership of some unemployed persons (in their most recent job); estimates from the 1982 survey were restricted to employed persons and related to trade union membership in any job.
- 1987 Definition of transport benefit broadened.
- 1988 Preliminary publication for employment benefits discontinued.
- 1990 Scope of survey restricted to persons aged 15 to 69 (for this year only).
- 1991 Survey month changed to July (for this year only) because of the August 1981 Census post-enumeration survey.
Persons attending school were not asked questions about their employment benefits other than entitlements to leave (paid holiday, paid sick and long service), and goods and services benefits.
- 1992 Frequency of trade union membership data increased to annual. Data continued to be published separately on a biennial basis in **Trade Union Members, Australia** (Cat. no. 6325.0) until 1996. Limited data were also published in **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0) on alternate years (1993, 1995, 1997) until the publications were combined in 1998.
Frequency of detailed employment benefits data reduced to biennial, with limited data collected on alternate years. Detailed data continued to be published separately in **Employment Benefits, Australia** (Cat. no. 6334.0) until 1994. Limited data were also published in **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0) in 1993. Note: in years when detailed employment benefits data were collected, persons attending school were not asked questions about their employment benefits other than entitlements to leave (paid holiday, paid sick and long service) and superannuation; in years when limited data were collected all persons were asked only about entitlements to leave (as before) and superannuation.
- 1994 Sample restricted to no more than seven-eighths of the Labour Force Survey sample. Frequency of detailed employment benefits data reduced to irregular (1994, 1999), with limited data collected annually (for all persons in scope of survey). Detailed data published separately in 1994 in **Employment Benefits, Australia** (Cat. no. 6334.0.40.001). Limited data published annually from 1995 in **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0.40.001).
Standard Data Service replaced publication format.
- 1996 Earnings data not collected, due to Census post-enumeration survey. **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0) not published.
Trade union membership and limited employment benefits data published in **Trade Union Members, Australia** (Cat. no. 6325.0).
Publication format replaced Standard Data Service.

- 1997** Limited employment benefits and trade union membership data published in **Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution), Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0).
Persons living in remote and sparsely settled areas excluded from scope.
- 1998** .
Separate publications for weekly earnings, employment benefits and trade union members discontinued and replaced with a combined publication - **Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia** (Cat. no. 6310.0).
- 1999** .
Detailed employment benefits data collected for all persons in scope of survey.

FURTHER INFORMATION

20.2.9 For further details contact the Assistant Director, Monthly and Multi-purpose Population Surveys Section, on Canberra (02) 6252 6660.

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